

RFA - STRENGTHENING THE NGO SECTOR

POSTED: 01-27-03

CLOSING DATE: 03-24-03

USAID/DCHA/PVC

M/OP-03-467

Set of Q & A #1 –(See Amendment 1 - Posted 2-12-03)

SET OF Q & A #2 - POSTED: 3-5-03

1) Question: West Africa Regional Program (WARP):

- The WARP office is listed as the point of contact for the West Africa region. Does this mean that proposals focusing on West African countries are required to be submitted only to the WARP office, and not to individual country missions?
- This mail is to request clarification on the eligible countries list for the recently released RFA Number M/OP-03-467 Entitled, " Strengthening the NGO Sector". Under the Western Africa Regional Program (WARP) could a single country proposal be submitted?

Applications that are submitted for WARP are expected to demonstrate a regional impact and to complement WARP's strategic objectives. The WARP office located in Bamako, Mali is the point of contact for the West Africa Region. All applications for that region should be submitted to the WARP office. Do not submit applications to the individual country missions included in WARP. Note that individual countries are listed for every region, with the exception of WARP. For more information on WARP please see the following website
http://www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/country_info/warp.html

2) Question: Number of Submissions:

Can an organization submit more than one proposal? If an organization submits as a lead on one proposal, can they also submit as a sub on another?

Response:

An organization may submit one proposal in which it is the prime. The prime may be proposed as a subgrantee by another applicant.

3) Question: Match Documentation:

- On pg 24, bullet 6 on Cost share says that "applicants must demonstrate ability to provide the proposed match via letters of commitment." Does this mean we need to have letters of commitment from the sources that would provide cash/non-cash match? Given one of the goals of the program which is to strengthen the financial sustainability of local organizations and their programs, a key strategy should be building local investment (cash & non-cash, from private and commercial sources) into the work of the local organization. One would expect most of the cash match to come from such sources if the investment is to be sustained (vs. from outside donor sources which are fickle). It would seem that securing such commitment would be a goal of the project, not something that can be secured prior to the project. Is it acceptable for the applicant organization to state in a letter that they commit to generate the required match amount, and to provide illustrative sources and strategies?
- If a project is proposed that is built upon - - and amplifies - - a highly complementary project funded by non-US government sources and involves in-country sub-grants, can the funds

used to support the complementary project satisfy the cash match requirement? If so, can the entire project budget be considered as matching funds, or just the amount devoted to in-country sub-grants?

- In calculating the 30% match and the 15% in cash requirement, would USAID consider parallel, complementary, yet separate programs in the same country and/or region as acceptable?
- Regarding the match - does this have to be secured before the application? We usually submit a plan for where we expect the match to come from and then guarantee it ourselves (i.e. the letter of commitment comes from us and not the donor yet).

Response:

The intent is for each lead organization to provide evidence of “collateral” toward the match. The type of program and the program design for each application will determine how the match (cash and in-kind) is to be attained. Actual and/or expected sources and amounts of the cost-share amount must be stipulated.

In calculating the 30% match, organizations are asked to provide assurances that the match would be applied toward this program and that it is not already tied to another program. The cash match is intended to be private funds, not other USG funds.

For cost share matters – the applicant/grantee’s cost share must comply with ADS 303. It is the applicant’s responsibility to identify their cost share and ensure that when they do include/identify it, that they do so in compliance with the applicable regulations, ADS 303, A-110, OMB Circular A-110 and A-122. As to the “entire project” language (2nd bullet point), the applicant would have to be more specific in identification of the cost share since some things may not be permitted under the cost share portion. The applicant must make the determination based upon OMB Circular A-110 and 22 CFR 226 that they meet the requirement. The applicant would have to demonstrate how the other program would interface with their program under this new award; again, once they commit, they must supply the cost share. The cost share becomes part of the budget, the total program amount since without it, USAID funding alone would be insufficient.

4) Question: Question submission deadline/bidders conference

Is there a deadline for the submission of questions? Will there be a bidders conference organized for this RFA?

Response:

All questions are to be submitted in writing by March 18th to assure that there is sufficient time to respond and get the responses posted. There will not be a bidders conference for this RFA. Please note that this is an extension of the 3 week time limit on submitting questions stated under section IIA.

5) Question: Joint Proposal:

Would USAID consider a joint proposal from 2 or more organizations? If so, would the "external evaluation of its NGO capacity strengthening activities within the last 3 years", highlighted on page 6 of the RFA, be required for a subcontractor?

Response:

Yes, USAID/PVC would consider a joint proposal. As there would need to be a lead organization, that organization would be the one that would need to submit the external evaluation of its NGO capacity strengthening activities. While subgrantees are not required to provide external

evaluations, it is recommended that applicants provide additional documentation demonstrating that subgrantees also have experience and expertise in capacity building. Please note that teaming arrangements must be identified in the budget and if it is a joint venture, the legal document that established the joint venture (via an attorney) must be presented.

6) Question: NGO Sector

Would USAID consider a country-specific proposal that provides capacity building services to a collection of NGOs in a specific sector of the NGO community, ie., health sector, as opposed to providing services to the entire NGO community?

Response:

Yes. As stated in the RFA, PVC certainly will consider technical sector-specific applications that address the RFA criteria. PVC also recognizes that program needs and designs will differ substantially among communities, countries and regions. The potential range of interventions may also cut across technical sectors. The organizations that the NGO Strengthening Program seeks to improve are service delivery organizations that have constituencies at the local level and the networks and ISOs that strengthen and link these NGOs to a broad array of partners. Applications may address a single technical sector or one that cuts across technical sectors.

7) Question: Review Process Scoring

In Section III - Selection Criteria part A - Technical Review Process: The RFA states that the Program Description is 45 points and then has three point underneath it. We assume that the 45 points refers to the Situational Analysis (number 1) only.

Response :

No. The 45 points refers to the total for the program description. The situational analysis is one component of the program description. Please refer to both the Selection Criteria and the Technical Application Guidelines.

8) Question: Mission Approval

Does an applicant need to get mission approval from, and submit a full application to, each of the missions/countries in the region.

Response:

Applicants may submit one copy of the regional application to each of the contact persons identified in Annex D for each country that you're proposing to work in (but not a separate full application for each country-there's only one application per PVO this cycle). For countries that fall under the WARP program in West Africa, one application to the WARP mission in Mali is sufficient.

9) Question: Working with NGO Partners

Does the Strengthening the NGO Sector RFA include the possibility of working with just one or two NGOs in a country or must it cover an entire sector/network? The two examples given for the Planning Matrix and the illustrative interventions all involve working with a multitude of NGOs. Does this mean that we would not be considered for a grant that focused on supporting its current partners in the priority countries even though they are independent NGOs with their own Board of Directors, etc?

Response:

PVC is interested in supporting programs that have a broader and deeper effect on the NGO sector. A proposal that focuses only on strengthening an individual partner may not address the key rationale for the RFA. A proposal may, however, incorporate activities that will build the

capacity of an individual partner so long as those efforts are also linked to a broader NGO sector strengthening strategy.

10) Question: Multi-country proposals

The Amendment incorporates new language into Section II: Grant Application Instructions, namely, "PVC will consider only one application per PVO during this RFA cycle." This new language obviously means that a program involving more than one country should be proposed as a single application, rather than as a series of related applications. Our question is: Assuming that one submits a single application for such a multi-country program, will the application automatically be evaluated on an "all-or-nothing" basis (i.e., USAID must approve the entire program for all countries)? Or is it possible that USAID would approve the application for the proposed program in some, but not all, of the countries in the application?

Response:

PVC had received several questions regarding the number of countries/applications, so the wording in amendment #1 was used to reinforce what was already stated in the RFA.

Regarding the question, USAID may opt to fund all, some or none of a multi-country proposal.

11) Question: Page limits

How will a single proposal, multiple-country submission affect the technical proposal and annex page limits, especially if different countries have different program approaches, activities, key staff, and M&E plans? Will PVC allow for an extension of page limits if a proposal is a multiple-country response?

Response:

The page limitations are the same for single or multi-country proposals. PVC will not allow for an extension of the page limits.

12) Question: Mission Participation in the Review:

How would the technical and cost review committees, particularly at the Mission level, evaluate a multiple-country proposal? How would the USAID/Guatemala Mission, for example, review and evaluate a Malawi-Guatemala proposal? Would they just focus on the Guatemala technical and budget portions? Please elaborate on the process.

Response:

There will be a review committee with USAID Washington personnel. Missions for the relevant country(ies) will be invited to participate. A mission may choose to provide input only on the relevant country in a multi-country application, or they may choose to participate in the full review. Mission assessment of the applications will be an important consideration of the Technical Evaluation Committee.

13) Question: Budget for Evaluations

The RFA specifies that a mid-term and a final project evaluation are required. Would you provide a "plug" figure for these evaluations for budgeting purposes?

Response:

No. There are a variety of ways that an evaluation can be conducted and associated costs will change accordingly. It is up to the PVOs to make a determination as to the cost estimate for all budget items, including evaluations.

14) Question: East Timor Contact

Annex D provides USAID contacts for all of the eligible countries except East Timor. Would you provide a contact for East Timor?

Response:

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15) Question: Partner located in a Non-Eligible Country

Can a partner be located in a non-eligible country, e.g., El Salvador, but work in eligible countries, e.g., Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua?

Response:

This kind of arrangement could be acceptable as part of a regional approach so long as the NGO Sector strengthening activities will take place in the eligible countries. For example, a PVO may have a subgrantee relationship with an organization in a non-eligible country to provide technical assistance in an eligible country.